



FY 2013 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

Policies and Procedures

Planned Tasks for 2013:¹

Office of Civil Rights (OCR):

- Issue an annual Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy Statement from the Regional Administrator.
- Provide each new supervisor with an EEO orientation and a packet that has appropriate EEO materials, including the Regional Administrator's EEO Policy Statement, Administrator's Diversity Statement, and Administrator's Sexual Harassment Statement.
- Develop and post an annual training calendar on the Regional Intranet that includes a monthly schedule for training on EEO issues for employees and supervisors.
- Establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) by September 30, 2013 for Regional Office of Civil Rights processes, which may include the EEO Complaints process, Form 4700-4 processing, iComplaints case management, etc.
- Draft a framework for a Regional Diversity & Inclusion Plan by May 1, 2013.
- Propose a new Regional award by July 1, 2013, to recognize outstanding work in the fields of EEO, Minority Academic Institutions (MAI), and Special Emphasis Programs (SEP).

Human Capital Office (HCO):

- Develop and post a training calendar on the Regional Intranet by March 31, 2013 that includes, but is not limited to sessions on training software, leadership development, conduct & discipline, and workforce benefits.

Accomplishments Narrative:²

OCR:

On November 15, 2012, the Regional Administrator disseminated and endorsed the Administrator's 2012 Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement, via an email to all employees.

¹ To be filled out and submitted to OCR by April 5, 2013

² To be filled out and submitted to OCR by October 31, 2013



FY 2013 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

All new supervisors who attended New Employee Orientation were provided with copies of the agency's current EEO documents. Additionally, all supervisors in each Division had the opportunity to attend Divisional meetings with Office of Civil Rights Staff and be provided with guidance and current copies of EEO and harassment policies. Also, all employees, including supervisors were provided with the Regional Administrator's endorsement of the Administrator's 2012 EEO policy, as stated above.

OCR posted a training calendar on the Region 5 Intranet during the first quarter and updated the calendar on a quarterly basis, and as training opportunities were developed and scheduled.

Throughout the fiscal year, OCR enacted new SOP for The EEO Complaints Process, Responding to EEO Investigators' Requests During Formal EEO Investigations, The Informal EEO Intake Process, and the Special Emphasis Program Planning Schedule.

In November of 2012, OCR began drafting a Regional action plan with items that mirrored the national Diversity and Inclusion Plan. Due to personnel, organizational, and policy changes at Headquarters and within the Region, this draft plan remains in a state of change and revision. Additionally, Region 5 agreed to work with the Office of Civil Rights at Headquarters to develop a model MD 715 submission.

In June of 2013, OCR submitted a proposal to Assistant Regional Administrator for the introduction of the Regional Award for Excellence in Civil Rights Administration.

HCO:

The HCO training calendar was posted on the Region 5 Intranet under the Human Resources Workforce Development Team (WDT) tab.



FY 2013 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

Complaints Processing and Procedures

Planned Tasks for 2013:¹

OCR:

- Maintain close communication with all assigned EEO Counselors by stressing efficiency and adherence to deadlines to ensure focus on the informal case processing target of thirty days or less.
- Provide assistance to EEO Counselors from different Regions by relaying Region specific information to ensure that informal EEO processing runs smoothly.
- Promote use of ADR by discussing its benefits and answering questions about the mediation program during training sessions for managers.

HCO:

- Maintain a tracking system and conduct quarterly reviews of pending grievances, Unfair Labor Practices (ULP), Information Requests (both Union and FOIA), and other employee issues to ensure timeliness and effective resolution.

Employee Services Branch (ESB):

- Formally issue updated SOP for the Regional Reasonable Accommodation Process by September 30, 2013, which will fully clarify roles and responsibilities and further streamline the process.
- Continue the use of a tracking system that draws on the Reasonable Accommodation Database and assists staff in resolving issues such as delays in the interactive process and stalled decision making.

Accomplishments Narrative:²

OCR:

The Region 5 EEO Officer maintained regular communication with EEO Counselors across the country who were working on Region 5 cases. In addition the EEO Officer was on the training workgroup that is currently training EEO counselors. OCR will continue to improve its processing time performance through focus on efficient EEO Counseling, prompt communication with the Federal Executive Board when mediation is

¹ To be filled out and submitted to OCR by April 5, 2013

² To be filled out and submitted to OCR by October 31, 2013



FY 2013 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

needed, continued guidance, education, and training for managers on how to prevent and respond to EEO complaints, and through educating employees about potential resolution of EEO issues at the earliest opportunities.

All EEO Counselors who were assigned to Region 5 cases were instructed by the National Pre-Complaints Manager to contact the Region 5 EEO Officer before making contact with Complainants. During those contacts, the EEO Officer communicated case-specific information to the EEO Counselors, including communication techniques and the possibility of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

During FY 2013, OCR provided ADR-specific guidance within its general EEO training sessions for supervisors and employees (forty-five total employees). Additionally, OCR conducted two separate training sessions for supervisors that solely focused on ADR (nine supervisory employees). OCR also met with each Responsible Management Official (RMO) when Complainants elected ADR and explained the mediation process and the need for cooperation. OCR will continue to provide guidance to managers about the requirement to participate in ADR when it is deemed appropriate by the agency and elected by Complainants.

Additionally, Region 5 has committed to working closely with the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance and the Office of General Counsel to expedite resolution of its open Title VI case.

HCO:

The HR Tracking System was instrumental when conducting quarterly reviews, in partnership with the Office of Regional Counsel. The tracking system is updated weekly with information, consistent with on-going discussions and mutual decisions.

ESB:

ESB updated and issued a seven-year old SOP for the Regional Reasonable Accommodations Process. This new, comprehensive SOP details the expectations for all interested parties and defines the expectations of the Local Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator, including the use of checklists to make sure that each unique interactive process consistently meets certain standards. This SOP fits within the national Reasonable Accommodations Program and should lessen confusion of both employees and supervisors within Region 5.

ESB continued its use of a tracking system that draws on the Reasonable Accommodation Database, which has resulted in stable or reduced processing times of reasonable accommodation requests. This established tracking system helps the Region ensure that requests are processed promptly, in accordance with existing agency policy.



FY 2013 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

Special Emphasis Programs and Outreach

Planned Tasks for 2013:³

OCR:

- Clarify the scope of the SEP to include cultural programs, community/MAI outreach, employee development, and mentoring.
- Work with the SEP Managers to meet planning schedules and develop new and interesting material that improves Regional participation in cultural events.
- Post all relevant MAI information on the Regional Intranet and maintain a calendar of all MAI job fairs, as well as job fairs that target veterans and persons with disabilities.
- Insert MAI activities into the SEP Managers' responsibilities by having them provide assistance at MAI events, workshops, job fairs, and/or lectures.
- Build on the increased senior management participation at commemorative observances in FY 2012 by aggressively soliciting their participation and providing recognition for serving as featured speakers/presenters in FY 2013 events.
- Revise the Region 5 mentoring program to include SEP constituent groups.

HCO:

- Evaluate options to increase participation in the EPA-sponsored Science Colloquium by the two current schools and any potential new schools in FY 2014.

Accomplishments Narrative:⁴

OCR:

The full scope of the SEP responsibilities was laid out in the FY 2013 SEP Work Plan and communicated to the SEP Managers in March of 2013. OCR also spoke to the SEPMs regarding a continuing focus on the EPA-brand during outreach events.

Throughout the fiscal year, the SEP Manager Coordinator engaged in individual and continuing contact with each SEP Manager to plan schedules for each cultural event

³ To be filled out and submitted to OCR by April 5, 2013

⁴ To be filled out and submitted to OCR by October 31, 2013



FY 2013 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

and give enough time for preparation so that each cultural event included the participation of senior-level speakers and subject matter experts.

Throughout the fiscal year, the MAI Coordinator updated the job fair calendar, on the Regional Intranet, as changes to scheduling occurred.

SEP Managers were informed that providing assistance at MAI events, workshops, etc., was part of their responsibilities. They were to provide this assistance when the necessary budgetary resources become available to fund job fair attendance and other MAI events.

Senior management participation in commemorative observances reached new heights in FY 2013, with senior managers from each Division making opening remarks at events, enthusiastically attending events, and giving SEP Managers the opportunity to communicate directly with them and their employees.

On April 23, 2013, the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and the SEP Manager Coordinator met with the Assistant Regional Administrator and provided suggestions on how the SEP might meaningfully contribute to the FY 2014 mentoring program. Region 5 agreed to promote the program to all employees and SEP Managers have been encouraged to promote participation with their constituents.

HCO:

Throughout the evaluation process, HCO discovered that the options to add schools to any new school year of the Colloquium were limited to selective enrollment schools that offer either a seminar or colloquium day. Jones College Prep High School participated in the Principal For A Day program, was approached last year about the Colloquium, and responded, indicating that it had to eliminate its seminar day and change its schedule. *Best Academy* was also approached and could not fit the program into its current schedule.



FY 2013 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

Disability Program

Planned Tasks for 2013:⁵

OCR:

- Increase disability representation to 2% or more of the Regional workforce through training sessions and meetings with Divisional management. Provide managers with training and tools that allow them to efficiently use direct-hiring authorities to recruit and hire veterans and applicants with disabilities.
- Provide veterans who have disabilities with short-term, non-paid internship opportunities designed to lead to direct-hire employment, increasing their representation in the workplace.

Accomplishments Narrative:⁶

OCR:

Throughout the fiscal year, OCR met separately with each Division's management team to discuss Civil Rights initiatives and concepts, including the opportunity to hire veterans with disabilities through a partnership program with the Department of Veterans Affairs. This non-paid disabled veteran intern program placed two veterans with disabilities throughout the Region during this fiscal year. Due to extremely limited external hiring, none of the new veterans with disabilities have been placed into permanent positions yet, but future flexibilities may still allow placement to be made. *As of September 30, 2013, disability representation in Region 5 stood at 1.9%.*

⁵ To be filled out and submitted to OCR by April 5, 2013

⁶ To be filled out and submitted to OCR by October 31, 2013



FY 2013 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

Diversity and Workplace Best Practices

Planned Tasks for 2013:⁷

OCR:

- Develop two or three effective ways of promoting participation in workgroups, details, temporary promotions, and other professional development opportunities for all employees by July 1, 2013. Ensure implementation throughout the rest of the fiscal year.
- Create an Open Status Report for informal and formal EEO cases for distribution to the Director, Office of Civil Rights, and the Deputy Regional Administrator on a monthly basis. Create other reports and charts that show progress of employment of under-represented demographics as well as historical EEO case statistics on a quarterly basis.
- Conduct an annual Region-wide education program through focused discussions with Divisional management on EEO, MAI, SEP, the NO FEAR Act, and the requirements of MD 715.
- Implement portions of the Regional Diversity & Inclusion Plan, including mandated panel interviews for positions at GS-13 and above and focused hiring of veterans who are disabled.

Accomplishments Narrative:⁸

OCR:

OCR developed and worked with the Human Capital Office and Assistant Regional Administrator to develop a mentoring program that would encourage more participation of minorities through the use of Special Emphasis Program Managers. In all of our training and educational initiatives we highlighted elements of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan that we felt would be successful and would promote diversity in the Region. We also promoted diversity and workplace best practices throughout the fiscal year in all our meetings with managers. We did see increased participation and selection of minorities in our Management Leadership Development Program and in temporary promotions of minority candidates. Another action item that we focused on was to develop our use of networking tools to increase the visibility of R5's diversity

⁷ To be filled out and submitted to OCR by April 5, 2013

⁸ To be filled out and submitted to OCR by October 31, 2013



FY 2013 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

activities. We now use both intranet banners and broadcast telephone messages to get out details of diversity events.

On a monthly basis, the Region 5 EEO Officer provided the Director, Office of Civil Rights with an Open Status Report for all informal and formal cases that were in various stages of processing. The Director shared information with the Deputy Regional Administrator during scheduled weekly meetings. On a monthly and quarterly basis, the EEO Officer also provided the Director with case summary spreadsheets, case identification reference material, visual representations of case data, and historical EEO case statistics. The EEO Officer also provided the Director with quarterly information that showed the progress of employment of under-represented demographics, taken from the VPEEO software and data sets.

Throughout the fiscal year, all of the Region 5 OCR staff were guests at management meetings for each Division. During these meetings the OCR Director and her staff gave presentations on EEO, MAI, SEP, and other civil rights concepts. Additionally, OCR gave three training sessions for supervisors throughout the year that reiterated the requirements of the No FEAR Act. OCR also communicated with key stakeholders throughout Regional management on a quarterly basis to emphasize MD 715 requirements and follow-up on FY 2013 MD 715 Commitments and Accomplishments.

Through training, meetings, and written communication, managers were reminded of the need for panel interviews when evaluating applicants for GS-13 and above vacancies. Through meetings with Divisional management, all managers were given the opportunity to receive details about the various tools and special hiring authorities that were available to hire any qualified person with a disability.